

The Language of Flowers

Created by **Chris Nielsen**
Training Type: **Endurance**
Working HR Zone: **Zone 3 to Zone 5**
Total Class Length: **60 minutes**



Description

The class is asked to react to a simple prompt and the accompanying music and to create that sensation/emotion in their bodies through manipulation of cadence, resistance, and position. This is a nice counterpoint to very structured profiles and also provides a learning experience for newer riders.

Objective and Intensity

This profile is one of a series in which I turn control of effort (expressed as resistance and cadence) over to the students. I often offer something similar at the end of a period of very prescriptive classes where profiles are specifically designed to achieve measurable goals. It is a nice break for everyone but also allows newer riders to learn more about the connection between work and resistance, cadence and position. Intensity is at the discretion of the students.

If you are uncomfortable with allowing your riders select their own intensity, feel free to add your own intensity cues.

Background

The playlist for this class ranges widely from New Age with an Eastern sound, through classic rock to the White Stripes, with a dash of country for good measure. I selected songs that I felt matched, in terms of feeling and lyrics, the meaning of the associated flowers and that were in an appropriate beats per minute range for the type of efforts I thought would be produced. I welcome you to provide alternatives in terms of both flower choices and representative songs.

This class is about letting the students create their own associations between work and sensations and emotions. For that reason, I don't offer many cues after the drill and programmed resistance increases of the first few songs.

As a nice touch, you may want to hand out a flower to each of your riders after class!

Introduction and Warm-up**Plumeria, Kay-Ta, 1:42, 70 bpm**

Today we are going to do a class where you are in charge. You can, as always, do as much or as little work as you'd like. My only request is that you think about the prompts I offer and try to go inside yourself to generate an associated sensation or emotion. Then your challenge will be to link your work to what you have found.

What do April showers bring? That's right, May flowers. And flowers are our subject today. To be more specific, we are going to explore language of flowers. It seems that people have always attributed meaning to plants and flowers. For example, the Bible and Shakespeare's plays contain references to flowers as symbols. In Victorian England there was great interest in what came to be called floriography. Flowers became the foundation of a code for communication. They were assigned meanings, and with the use of a floral dictionary people could deliver messages that they perhaps could not say aloud. These coded bouquets were called noseays or tussie-mussies.

I have assembled a bouquet of flowers for you today. The playlist contains only songs that have the names of flowers in their titles and lyrics. At the beginning of each song I will tell you the meaning assigned to that flower. Your job will then be to interpret that meaning in your mind and body, on the bike. You have all the usual options—cadence, resistance, and position. The beat of the song choices and their general tone should give you some support in making those choices, but your interpretation is entirely your own.

I will be offering a few suggestions about the intensity of your effort but this is your hour. Do what feels right to you.

[This intro song's title flower, PLUMERIA, stands for SPRINGTIME/NEW BEGINNINGS.]

Mayflower, Asher Quinn, 3:43, 88 bpm

Our first flower is MAYFLOWER. It stands for WELCOME. Let's start our warm-up and open our minds and hearts to the experiences to come.

Cue the beginning of your preferred warm-up during this song.

Celandine, Wagner & Pohl, 5:16, 81 bpm

Continue your warm-up.

Our next flower is CELANDINE, which means JOYS TO COME.

Toward the end of the warm-up:

The first song of the working portion of today's class is called APPLE BLOSSOM. You should be very happy to see that in a bouquet because it indicates PREFERENCE. We are going to carry through on that idea with some preferential riding. We'll do one-leg drills, first with

one leg and then the other. I expect that you might be working in high Zone 2 or low Zone 3 during this song.

Apple Blossom, The White Stripes, 2:13, 64 rpm

Cue one-leg drills. I do 20 seconds per side for the duration of the song, alternating between left and right. Offer the usual guidance about the proper way to execute one-leg drills.

Toward the end of the song:

Our next song is RED ROSE, WHITE ROSE. When those two flowers appear together they mean UNITY. So let's get those legs working together. Your effort will climb, perhaps moving to the top of Zone 3.

Red Rose, White Rose—Fragrance of Roses, The City of Prague Philharmonic, 3:48, 114/57 bpm

Add some resistance to your bike. We will be adding more every 30 seconds for a total of six or seven increases. Let your leg speed drop so that it is approximately 60 rpm after the last increase.

Ivy, The Nervous Wreckords, 4:15, 76 bpm

Let's move on to IVY, which stands for ENDURANCE. Take off some resistance and establish a cadence that will create the intensity or effort you expect to maintain during an endurance ride. You will probably end up somewhere in Zone 3.

Cypress Tree, The Black Crowes, 3:41, 72 bpm

We have arrived at the CYPRESS TREE. It means DESPAIR or SORROW. Things are clearly getting worse. How will you represent that feeling in your body?

Marigold, Disappears, 3:14, 69 bpm

Next I am delivering a MARIGOLD to you. You won't be happy to receive it because it represents PAIN or GRIEF. Turn up your suffering. I expect that you will be working in Zone 4 at this point.

Love Lies Bleeding, High Road Easy, 3:33, 87 bpm

LOVE LIES BLEEDING. Yes, there is a flower with that name. It is also called Amaranthus and has long strands of red seeds that look like streams of blood. You can probably guess from the name that it is code for HOPELESSNESS. Listen to the music. We are off the hill and onto a flat, but in my imagination the wind is straight onto our chests. To me an all-day headwind is the true definition of hopelessness. You will probably still be working in Zone 4 but the work will feel very different.

Lobelia, Liquid Weeld, 3:47, 72 bpm

This music tells us that we are back on a hill. The song is called LOBELIA and it signifies MALEVOLENCE. It is dark and shadowy. You should feel a sense of foreboding. Feel free to stand and run from that sensation once in a while.

If your riders are going to move into Zone 5, it will likely be during this portion of the class.

Lily of the Valley, Queen, 1:45, 87 bpm

Here's LILY OF THE VALLEY. You'll be glad to hear that it stands for RETURNING HAPPINESS. Take a minute or two to recover and let the happiness return.

Only Heather, Wild Nothing, 3:21, 79 bpm

The next flower in your tussie-mussie is HEATHER, which represents SOLITUDE or BEAUTY. Set yourself up so you can feel the wonder of riding your bike alone. Perhaps you can imagine a winding road, with trees arching above and fields of flowers on each side.*

(Note: A “tussie-mussie” is a small bouquet, or nosegay, of flowers and herbs, a term dating from the 1400s.)

Magnolia, Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers, 3:03, 62 bpm (ridden at 93 rpm)

We have come to MAGNOLIA. It means LOVE OF NATURE. Pick up your cadence. Stay loose and keep it fun. Try to stay near the top of Zone 3.

Red Lilies, Aphelion, 3:53, 74 bpm

RED LILIES mean HIGH-SOULED ASPIRATION. That's pretty deep. Dig in and work a little harder. Aspire to a higher soul! That will probably take you into Zone 4.

Camellia, Sarah Wheeler, 2:38, 72 bpm

The next blossom in your bouquet is a beautiful CAMELLIA. It marks UNPRETENDING EXCELLENCE. Stay loose, keep it real, focus on form—experience excellence.

People generally remain in Zone 4 for this song.

Orchid, Shao Rong, 3:45, 70 bpm

The very last flower in the arrangement today is an ORCHID. It stands for REFINED BEAUTY. Begin to drop your effort slightly but stay connected to the quality and beauty of this activity.

Cool-down and Stretch

The Passing of the Plumeria, Daniel Lentz, 5:55

The Language of Flowers, Eric Harry, 4:07, 84 bpm

I hope you enjoyed the flowers I brought to you today. I think it was a good to exercise to link your thoughts to your work. So much more happens when we ride a bike than just turning the pedals. It's important to formally acknowledge that once in a while. It's also nice to step back and appreciate the days when life was both simpler and more complex. Some days I think I would rather have to puzzle out a correspondent's intentions from the flowers they sent, rather than reading between the lines in an e-mail.

Title	Artist	Album	Available From
Plumeria	Kay-Ta	Quickstar Productions Presents: Chill Out—An Acoustic Compilation Vol. 7	eMusic
Mayflower	Asher Quinn	Sketches of Innocence	iTunes, eMusic
Celandine	Wagner & Pohl	Celandine	iTunes, eMusic
Apple Blossom	The White Stripes	De Stijl	iTunes
Red Rose, White Rose—Fragrance of Roses	The City of Prague Philharmonic	Farewell My Concubine	iTunes
Ivy	The Nervous Wreckords	Let Them All Talk	iTunes, eMusic
Cypress Tree	The Black Crowes	Lions	iTunes, eMusic
Marigold	Disappears	Lux	iTunes, eMusic
Love Lies Bleeding	High Road Easy	Drive	iTunes, eMusic
Lobelia	Liquid Weeld	Flra	iTunes, eMusic
Lily of the Valley	Queen	Queen 40	iTunes
Only Heather	Wild Nothing	Nocturne	iTunes, eMusic
Magnolia	Tom Petty & The Heartbreakers	You're Gonna Get It	iTunes